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YUGOSLAVIA: Slovenes Claim Right To Secede

Slovene and federal officials are battling about proposed amendments to Slovenia's constitution that would let the republic secede and deny Belgrade the ability to impose martial law there without local permission. The federal presidency claims the amendments are not constitutional and has called a special meeting today to discuss the Slovene actions. Early this week Slovene leaders declared federal officials were interfering and set a date later this month to put the amendments into effect.

Although Slovenia's latest attempt to limit federal powers will increase tensions between Slovene and federal officials, secession is not likely. Slovene party leader Kucan has declared Slovenia will not secede and knows Belgrade would intervene militarily if it tried. He probably will try toning down antifederal statements, but Slovene officials will not back down on the amendments because sentiment for political liberalization and greater autonomy is widespread in the republic. Belgrade is not likely to take military action unless pressed.

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